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— GOVERNMENT OF PORTO RICO —  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BULLETIN, 1917, No. 2 . . . . . WHOLE NUMBER 11 ✓

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BULLETIN OF GENERAL INFORMATION  
ON POSITIONS OPEN TO AMERICAN TEACHERS  
IN THE  
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF PORTO RICO

PUBLISHED BY  
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SAN JUAN, P. R.

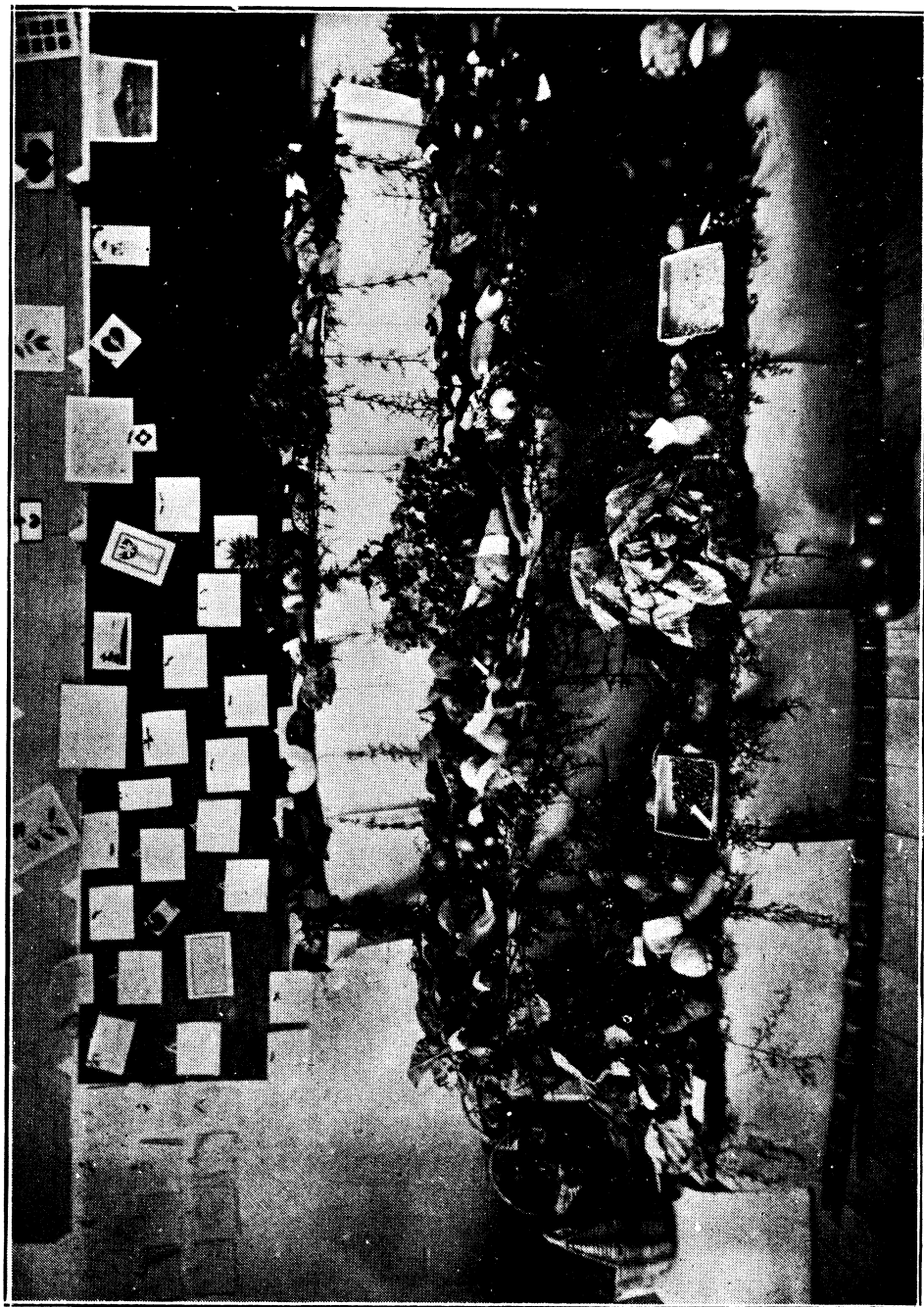


SAN JUAN, P. R.  
BUREAU OF SUPPLIES, PRINTING, AND TRANSPORTATION  
1917



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Agricultural Exhibit, San Sebastián, P. R.

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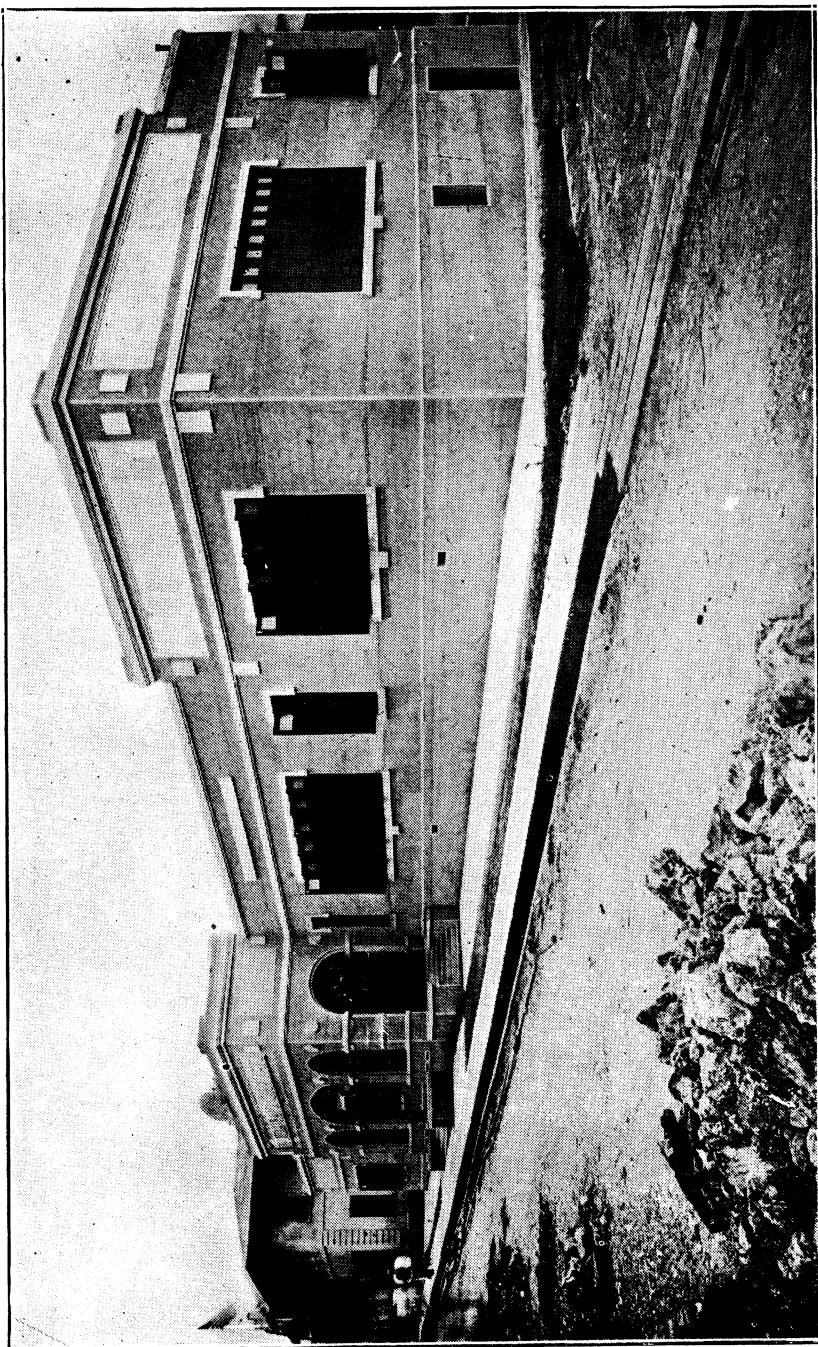
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Ramón Villá Mayo School, Río Piedras, P. R.



## THE SCHOOL SYSTEM.

The island of Porto Rico is divided for administrative purposes into 74 political units, known as municipalities. These municipalities consist generally of an urban center and outlying rural territory subdivided into *barrios* or wards. Every four years the qualified voters of each municipality elect a school board composed of three members, who elect from their number a president and a secretary and appoint a treasurer to disburse their funds. The school district is thus coterminous with the municipality and the jurisdiction of the school board extends equally over the urban and the rural territory. The school boards have charge of all school buildings located within their district; they have power to erect, repair, remodel, and improve school property, and may, within certain limitations, contract indebtedness, borrow money, or issue bonds for this purpose; they provide suitable furniture and equipment for all the schools in their respective districts except high schools; appoint janitors, suspend pupils from the schools, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Education; may suspend teachers pending the action of this officer; and elect all rural, graded, and principal teachers subject to the approval of the Commissioner.

The school boards have two ordinary sources of revenue—25 per cent of 90 per cent of the municipal property tax and a special tax known as “the school tax,” consisting of one-tenth of 1 per cent on all real and personal property within the municipality. While this school tax is purely optional, its maximum is generally imposed by the municipalities. These two taxes produce yearly about half a million dollars.

By virtue of the powers conferred on him in the organic act, the Commissioner of Education is the comptroller and auditor of all expenditures incurred for education on the island, and consequently he may reject any expenditure illegally incurred.

The schools of the island are divided into five classes: rural, graded, continuation, high, and special, the latter class comprising night, music, drawing, agriculture, industrial, and all other schools not otherwise classified.

For the purpose of supervision, the island is divided at present into 41 districts, classified as follows: first, municipalities having 100 schools or more; second, municipalities having between 50 and

99 schools; third, municipalities or groups of municipalities containing less than 50 schools. There are 2 first, 3 second, and 36 third-class districts. Although the law provides for an automatic increase in the number of districts, since no district of the third class may contain more than 50 schools, the number has remained stationary in recent years because the Insular Legislature has made no provision for such increase in the annual budget. In charge of each district there is a supervising official known as supervisor of schools, appointed by the Commissioner of Education and acting as his immediate representative. In districts of the first class this officer receives \$1,500, with an allowance of \$240 for house and office rent, and in those of the second \$1,300, with the same allowance. In districts of the third class the salary is \$1,100, with the same allowance for rent and an extra allowance of \$200 for traveling expenses in districts of more than one municipality.

The supervisor of schools is *ex officio* a member of the school board and entitled to participate in its discussions, to receive notice of its meetings, to examine its minutes, records, and accounts in like manner as a duly elected member of the board, but he is not entitled to vote. He shares with the school board the right to assign the teachers to their respective grades and schools. In addition, he performs any duties prescribed for him by the Commissioner, and he is required by law to submit an annual report covering the work of his district. He has an office equipped in accordance with the importance and dignity of his position and he keeps regular office hours, but the greater part of his time is spent in visiting the schools and advising the teachers.

At the head of the educational system of the island stands the Commissioner of Education, appointed for a term of four years or at the pleasure of the President of the United States, with full power of appointment over all subordinates except certain classes of teachers. He is empowered to determine the course of study, the length of the school year within limitations prescribed by law and the length of the school day. He is in charge of the examination and certification of teachers, and no expenditure of public moneys for school purposes, on the part of either the school boards or any of his subordinates in the department, can be made without his approval. He is a member of the Executive Council (the Upper House of the Insular Legislature), *ex officio* president of the Board of Trustees of the University and of the Insular Library.





**The Haunted Sentry Box of Fort San Cristóbal, San Juan, P. R.**

The Commissioner is assisted in his administrative functions by a personnel organized as follows: An assistant commissioner, a secretary of the department and a division of records, of which the secretary is the chief, a division of property and accounts with chief, a division of school-board accounts with chief, three general superintendents, a special supervisor of Spanish, a special supervisor of manual training, a special supervisor of home economics, a special supervisor of agriculture, a special supervisor of music, a special supervisor of drawing, and clerical help.

The assistant commissioner is the head of the division of supervision, composed of the three general superintendents, the special supervisors, and the supervisors of schools; as such, he directs their activities. Due to the numerous duties devolving upon the Commissioner by virtue of his position as member of the Executive Council, the assistant has to relieve him of much detail work. In the absence of the Commissioner from the island he assumes the duties of the office except as a member of the Executive Council and as president of the Board of Trustees of the University.

The chief duties of the general superintendents are the organization and supervision of the school system as a whole, the preparation of questions for teachers' examinations, the holding of oral examinations for the authorization to teach in English, and the inspection and condemnation of unserviceable school property. In addition to these, they represent the Commissioner at teachers' conferences, where they speak; examine books and manuscripts submitted for use in the schools; and advise the Commissioner regarding the preparation of courses of study. The duties of the special supervisors are indicated by their titles. The special supervisors of manual training, home economics, agriculture, music, and drawing are connected with the University of Porto Rico.

The division of records handles all the details which arise from the examination and certification of teachers; keeps all documents and official records; files all official correspondence; prepares all statistics in connection with the work of the school system and, in general, aids the Commissioner in all matters not pertaining strictly to the other organized divisions.

The division of property and accounts handles all the work in connection with the purchase, distribution, and custody of books, supplies, and all office and school property bought and furnished by the department; it prepares and certifies the pay rolls of all teachers and

employees paid by the department and keeps a record of their absences as well as the civil-service records.

The division of school-board accounts handles all the work in connection with the approval of school-board budgets and the examination and audit of all school-board accounts; prepares all data relative to the financial standings of school boards required to pass upon the advisability of granting them authorization to contract indebtedness, borrow money or issue bonds; handles all details arising from the selection and purchase of sites by school boards for the construction and repair of buildings, or when these are referred to the Department of the Interior for expert advice, it is done through this division.

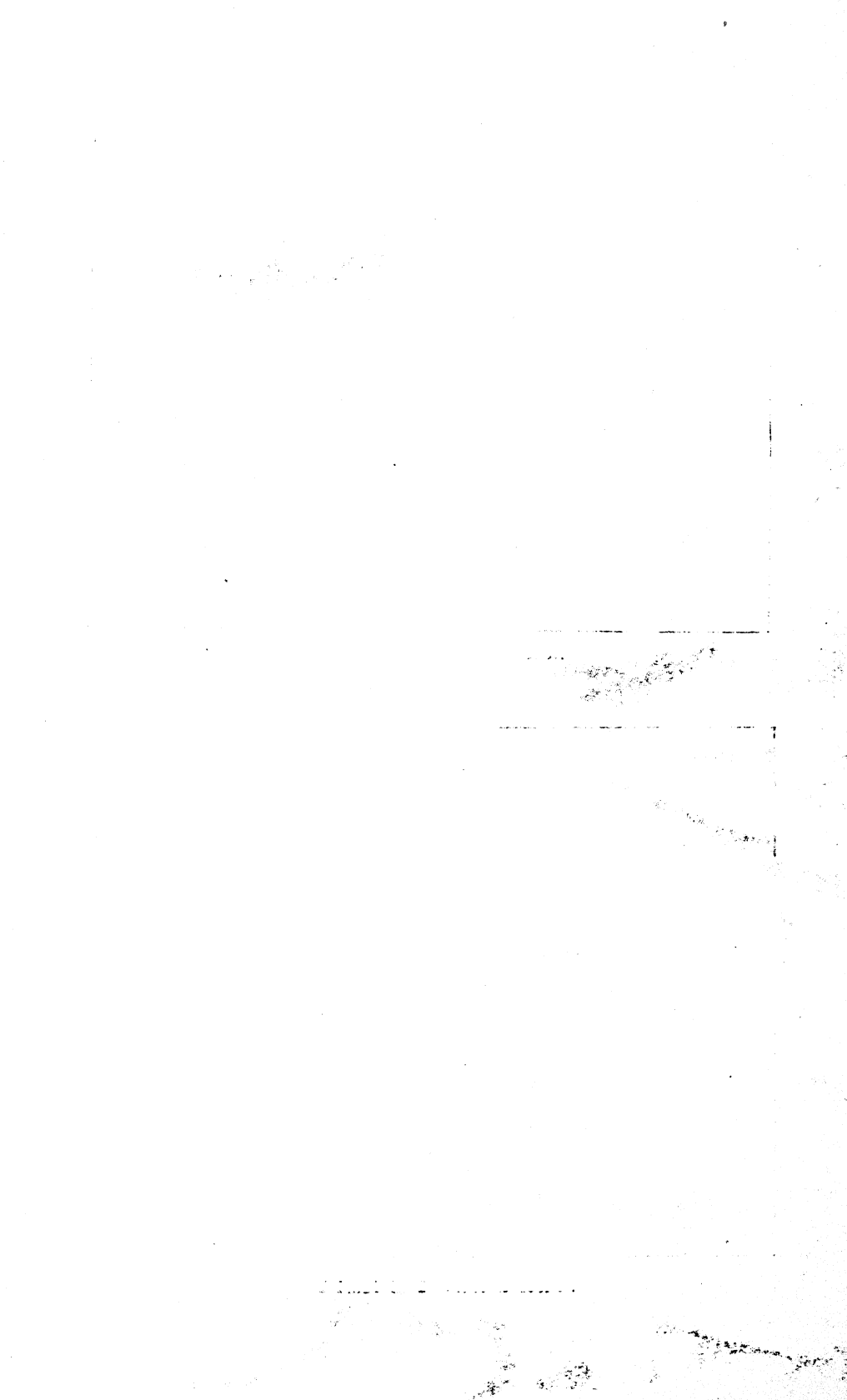
The revenues of the Department of Education originate in yearly appropriations from the Insular Legislature; its largest items go to pay the salaries of all the teachers in the service, supervising officials and members of the central office and for textbooks and supplies.

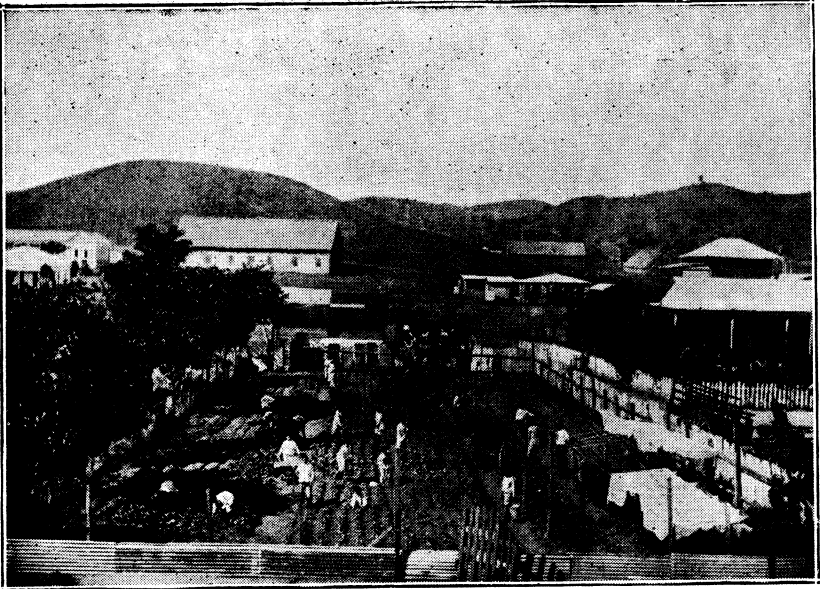
### **THE PEOPLE.**

The majority of the residents are whites of Spanish descent. Many of them are cultured, well educated, and refined, although the poorer people have little education and many are illiterate. They are kind-hearted, hospitable, and courteous in their treatment of strangers. The language spoken is Spanish, but English has been taught in the public schools since 1898, and now people who speak English may be found in every town on the island. The Porto Rican people look to the American teachers for an example of all that is American. They are ready to criticise every apparent fault, but they are equally ready to recognize true manhood and womanhood and to accept sincere friendship. They are very sensitive and resent unsympathetic criticism of local habits and customs by people who are not sufficiently acquainted with them to judge. The tourist who comes armed with a camera to hunt down the odd and picturesque for reproduction in northern newspapers is particularly obnoxious to the people of Porto Rico.

### **LIVING CONDITIONS.**

Living conditions in Porto Rico naturally enough differ greatly from those in the States, and teachers must expect to encounter some difficulties. In the smaller towns to which newly appointed teachers





School Garden. General Plot.



School Garden. Individual Plot.



are usually assigned, frequently there are no other American residents. As a rule, teachers board with good Porto Rican families and thus have an excellent opportunity to mingle with the best local society and to learn the language and customs of the people. The boarding accommodations are such as are to be expected in a tropical climate. The food is not prepared in American style, but teachers generally can secure modifications to meet their tastes. In most towns of the island, teachers can get room and board for \$20 or \$30 per month. Other living expenses are about the same as in the United States. In a few of the larger towns room and board will cost from \$35 to \$45 per month.

### **TEACHERS OF ENGLISH.**

Teachers of English must be graduates of a first-class high school, normal school, college or university, or teachers of extended experience, holding high-grade certificates from some State of the Union; or they must pass an examination in the English language (including writing, spelling, reading and grammar), arithmetic, geography, history of the United States, physiology, and methods of teaching. These examinations are held in Porto Rico only when there is a vacancy to which a local applicant wishes to be appointed. In the selection of candidates to fill vacancies, preference is given always to those who have had the right kind of experience and who possess the highest academic and professional preparation.

Teachers of English are usually assigned to upper-grade work in the grammar schools. They should be prepared to teach the following subjects: English reading and grammar, arithmetic, American history, civics, geography, physiology, music, drawing and free-arm writing. English is used as the medium of instruction. A knowledge of Spanish is not necessary, but a valuable asset, especially if a teacher is assigned to one of the smaller towns. Teachers of English receive a salary of \$75 per school month for nine months, but this salary is subject to change in the annual appropriation act of the Insular Legislature.

### **CONTINUATION SCHOOL TEACHERS.**

A continuation school is a "sprouting" high school, usually the first two years. Continuation teachers are selected primarily because of their ability to teach either woodworking or cooking and sewing.

They must be prepared, however, to assist with academic subjects. The academic subjects of the first year are algebra, English (classics, composition, and rhetoric), physical, commercial and industrial geography; and of the second year, English (classics, composition, and rhetoric), geometry, and general history. Spanish is taught by Porto Rican teachers. These schools are located in the larger towns. The salary paid these teachers is \$80 per school month, subject to change by the Insular Legislature.

### **SPECIAL TEACHERS.**

This class comprises all high-school teachers of academic, commercial, and industrial branches. Teachers of stenography must be able to teach the Gregg system, which is the only one used throughout the island. Teachers of home economics must be competent to teach both cooking and sewing. At the present time the department does not employ special teachers of music and drawing.

Salaries range from \$720 to \$1,440 per school year, depending upon training, experience, and length of service in Porto Rico.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION.**

The policy of the Department of Education is to promote teachers from the lower to the higher positions as far as the good of the service will permit.

Licenses to teach in Porto Rico can be issued only to persons of good health and character who are not less than 19 nor more than 65 years of age. Persons with deformities are not considered.

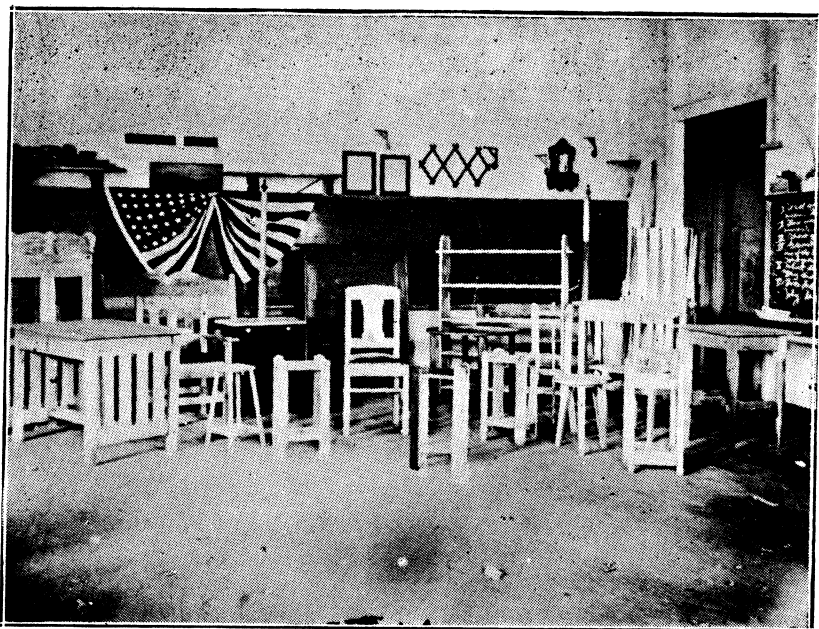
Applications from married women will not, as a rule, be considered, nor from persons over 40 years of age.

Persons accepting appointment to teach in Porto Rico must be willing to go wherever they may be sent.

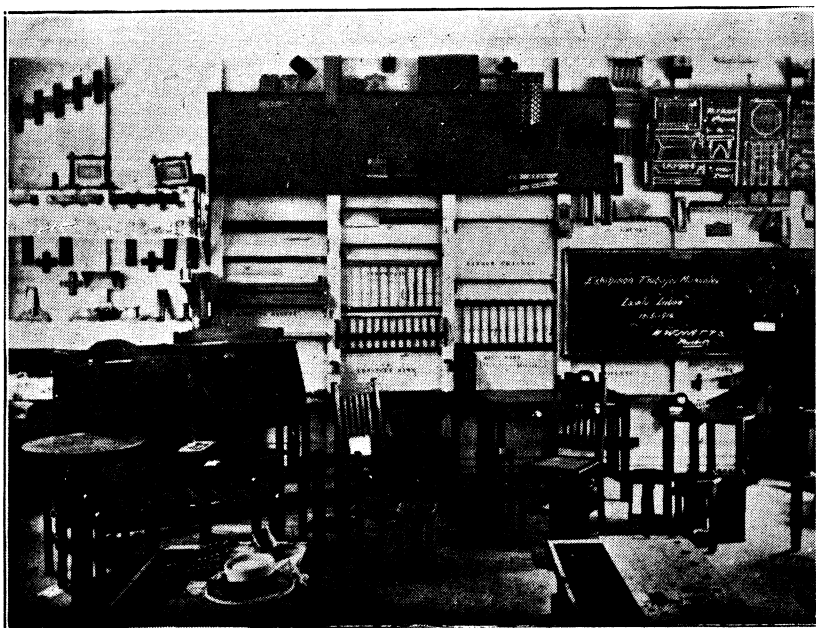
Teachers are required to sign a contract which is binding upon them until the end of the school year, unless they are released by the Commissioner of Education by reason of illness, inefficiency, or other just cause.

A knowledge of Spanish is necessary for promotion to supervisory positions. Teachers frequently prefer assignment to the smaller towns because of the better opportunity to acquire Spanish.





Manual Training Exhibit, Juana Díaz, P. R.



Manual Training Exhibit, San Juan, P. R.

The school year consists of 9 school months. The school month is 20 days of teaching. The school year begins about September 20. Teachers must report at San Juan for assignment.

The Government does not furnish transportation either to Porto Rico or to the place of assignment on the island. The Red "D" Line of steamships allows a discount of 20 per cent from the regular fare to teachers.

It is impossible for the department to make advance payments. Teachers must be prepared to pay their incidental expenses and their board and room for at least one month after their arrival in Porto Rico. At least \$50 should be allowed for expenses after arrival in San Juan.

Mail for teachers may be addressed to San Juan, in care of the Commissioner, and will be forwarded to them until they have had an opportunity to communicate with friends and give a definite address.

Applications for teaching positions in Porto Rico should be sent through the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Department, Washington, D. C. The Bureau will furnish the necessary blanks upon receipt of request. Application for appointment during the next school year should be made not later than April of the current year.

Two steamship lines carry passengers from New York to San Juan: the New York and Porto Rico Steamship Line, 11 Broadway, New York, and the Red "D" Line of steamships, 82 Wall Street, New York. First-class passage in the New York and Porto Rico Line costs about \$52.50, and in the Red "D" Line from \$35 to \$45. The boats of the New York and Porto Rico Line sail every Saturday at noon, and those of the Red "D" Line sail for San Juan on alternate Wednesdays. The trip down takes from 4 to 5 days.

Teachers appointed to the Porto Rico service should make their steamer reservations through the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Department, Washington, D. C. In case they make their own reservations, they should not fail to notify the Bureau,

## General outline of the course of study for the high schools of Porto Rico.

SUBJECT	FIRST YEAR	SECOND YEAR	THIRD YEAR	FOURTH YEAR
English	Composition ..... Rhetoric ..... Classics.....	Composition ..... Rhetoric ..... Classics.....	Composition and Rhetoric English Literature. Classics.....	Composition and Rhetoric American Literature Classics
Spanish	Grammar ..... Literature..... Composition .....	Composition ..... Rhetoric ..... Literature.....	Literature..... Composition .....	Literature Composition
Mathematics	Algebra ..... Commercial Arithmetic	Geometry .....	Solid Geometry... Advanced Algebra.	Higher Algebra Trigonometry
Science	Physical Geography Industrial and Commercial Geography	Biology .....	Physics.....	Chemistry
History		General History...		American and Porto Rican History and Civics
Foreign Language	Beginning Latin...	Cæsar and Composition	Cicero and Composition French .....	Virgil and Prosody French
Commercial Subjects	Typewriting .....	Bookkeeping..... Shorthand and Typewriting	Bookkeeping ..... Shorthand and Typewriting Commercial correspondence	Advanced Book-keeping Shorthand and Commercial Law Typewriting
Industrial Subject	Home Economics.. Manual Training..	Home Economics.. Manual Training..	Home Economics.. Manual Training..	Home Economics Manual Training



Eighth Grade Graduates, Isabela, P. R.



School Band, Cabo Rojo, P. R.







